

BV
4070
.C265
1867

AN ADDRESS

DELIVERED AT THE

SEMI-CENTENNIAL CELEBRATION

OF THE

CAMBRIDGE DIVINITY SCHOOL,

JULY 17, 1867,

By EZRA S. GANNETT.



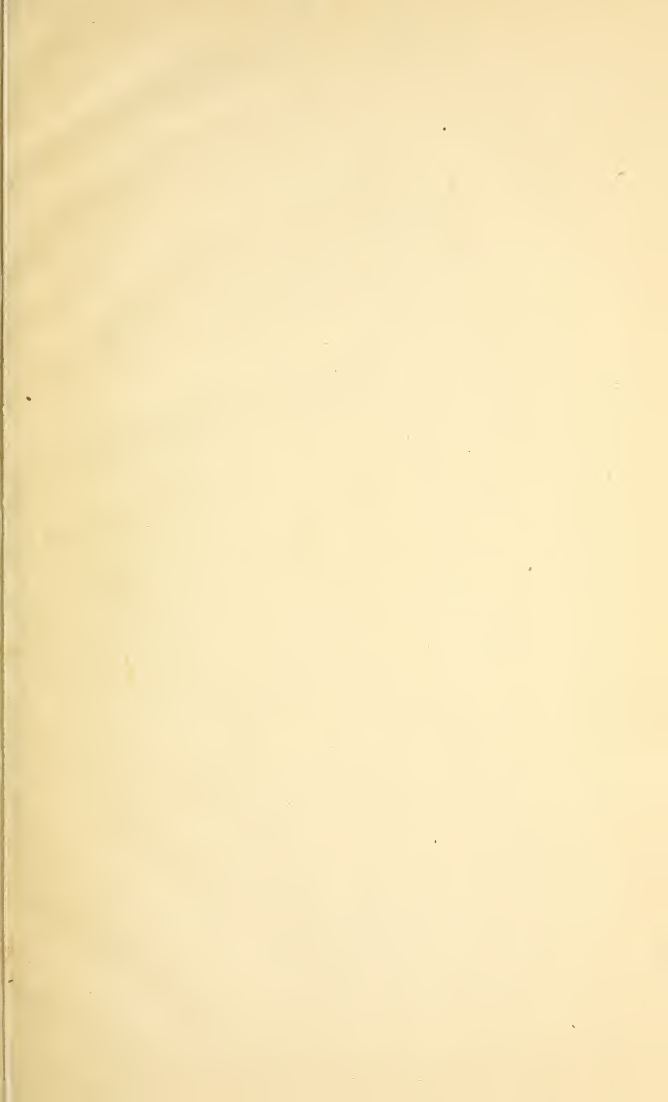
BOSTON:
LEONARD C. BOWLES.
1867.



Class BV4070

Book C265
1867

1







AN ADDRESS

DELIVERED AT THE

SEMI-CENTENNIAL CELEBRATION

OF THE

CAMBRIDGE DIVINITY SCHOOL,

JULY 17, 1867,

THE LIBRARY

OF THE

BY EZRA S. GANNETT.

1867

BOSTON:

LEONARD C. BOWLES.

1867.

BV4070
C265
1867

IN EXCHANGE

Boston Athenaeum

12 10 17 - Oxford 17/1905
Not dated - 17/1905

ADDRESS.

BRETHREN OF THE ALUMNI OF THE CAMBRIDGE DIVINITY SCHOOL:—

YOU were pleased on our last anniversary to provide for the delivery at this time of "a commemorative discourse, reviewing the history of the School for the last half-century;" and committed this service to my hands. With so much before me which I ought to say, and so much that for want of time cannot be said, I will not detain you with more than a single word of acknowledgment, nor obtrude a needless confession of inability to treat the theme as it might have been handled by many others. If I may brush away the dust that in the course of years has settled on your recollections of a history of which our own experience formed a part, or may remind you of the purposes and principles which marked the commencement and have been interwoven with the growth of this institution, I shall have accomplished all that it becomes me to undertake.

It is not easy to fix a precise date for the birth of our School. The votes passed by the alumni last year were founded on the instruction given with the programme of Exercises, that we were then attending the "fiftieth Annual Visitation." Dr. Palfrey, whose accuracy is unimpeachable, informs us that the first Annual Visitation for the reading of dissertations is believed to have taken place December 17,

1817. The Catalogue of the Alumni, issued in 1844, repeats this statement, and, after remarking that "the year 1816, when Dr. Ware gave instruction in Systematic Theology and other branches, and Mr. Norton in Sacred Literature, may on the whole be regarded as the first year of the existence of the Theological School in Cambridge," places the class of 1817 at the head of its list of graduates. If, therefore, we be tardy in celebrating our semi-centennial, we need ask forgiveness of the chronologists but for a few months' delay.

The interest which the College has taken in preparing young men for the ministry did not, however, begin half a century ago. It is coeval with the origin of the University. Each of the three College seals, alike by its device and by its motto, dedicates the institution to sacred uses. "During the first period of its existence," embracing fifty years, says President Quincy, "the College was conducted as a theological institution, in strict coincidence with the nature of the political constitution of the colony; having religion for its basis and chief object." A strictly professional education was, indeed, in the early times, and long afterwards, a thing unknown. Dr. Sprague's remark in his "Annals of the American Pulpit," that "whenever a young man had finished his college studies, if he considered himself as qualified, and could find some friendly gentleman in the ministry to introduce him in the pulpit, he began to preach, without any examination or recommendation from any body of ministers or churches," if slightly sarcastic, had a basis of historic truth. No regular course of instruction was accessible till the commencement of the present century, and the student could only avail himself—seldom for more than a year or two—of the advice of some minister, whose judgment might be a guide to him in his inquiries after the substance or form of Divine truth. A custom naturally grew up by which certain persons, eminent for intellectual gifts or practical qualities, became known as the theological tutors of their day. "No less than eighty-seven young men studied theology under the direction" of the late Dr. Emmons, "in the term of about fifty years:"—the Rev. Dr. Backus, of Connecticut, in the last fifteen years

of his ministry "received nearly fifty into his family," to whom he gave the benefit of his instruction.

With the advancing intelligence of the people, and especially with the introduction of critical study as a branch of theological training, a more thorough and systematic education was felt to be proper for those who should become the religious teachers of the land. The opportunities for general study which Cambridge offered, with the help to be derived from the Hollis Professor of Divinity, had for many years induced young men, on leaving college, to remain here as "Resident Graduates," in the expectation of finding advantages superior to any enjoyed under strictly private tuition. Dr. Ware "began a course of exercises in 1811," which "may be regarded as the first attempt towards a systematic arrangement of regular studies in this department." President Kirkland, who had in the previous year been persuaded to devote his brilliant gifts to the service of the College, lent his assistance. The Professor of Hebrew, whose scholarship, if it did not enkindle the wonder of his pupils, borrowed grace from a sincere and generous heart, pointed the way to an acquaintance with the Oriental languages; and when in 1813 Mr. Norton was chosen "Dexter Lecturer in Biblical Literature," the foundations of a Theological Faculty may be said to have been laid. Still it could not be considered a component part of the University; and the inadequacy of the funds from which aid could be furnished to those who needed it was keenly felt. Near the close of the year 1815, the Corporation addressed a circular to "the liberal and the pious," — a happy choice of words for their purpose, — in which they solicited funds for this object, and proposed the formation of "a Society for the education of candidates for the ministry, in Cambridge University, to be constituted of subscribers." This was the origin of a society whose subsequent relation to the School was a source of much benefit, and of some perplexity. That it was an anomalous relation must be admitted; and it may occasion surprise that so little trouble arose from a union of two bodies where one only could exercise efficient control. The attempt to increase the pecuniary ability of the College

was successful. More than twenty-seven thousand dollars was raised, and was intrusted to the care of the Society for the Promotion of Theological Education in Harvard University, one article in the Constitution of which provided that "every encouragement be given to the serious, impartial, and unbiased investigation of Christian truth; and that no assent to the peculiarities of any denomination of Christians be required either of the students, or professors, or instructors." It was a two-edged blade, which the authors of that sentence forged, for their successors, as well as themselves, to wield.

The success of this movement may be taken as marking the commencement of the Divinity School; for, as we have seen, the first class graduated the next year, 1817. Of that class of six, all graduates of 1814 on the College Catalogue, two are now living, — the senior Minister-at-large in Boston, still active and indefatigable in duty, and the honored ex-President, on whose mental powers the pressure of years has rested like the autumn sunshine on the fruits. The next class contained eleven, all, with the exception of him who sang the *Airs of Palestine*, but stood up for right with a mailed hand, graduates of the College in 1815. From that time to the present, the classes have been very unequal in number. The largest, containing fourteen, left the school in 1859; the smallest, having but two, in 1825. The whole number of alumni during the fifty years has been 379, giving an average of between seven and eight to a class; of whom 98 bear against their names the funeral star in the Triennial of 1866. Of the remaining 281, about three fifths are now engaged in the Christian ministry. Others have retired from the work; some never entered upon it.

It was not, however, till the inauguration of Mr. Norton, in 1819, as Professor on the foundation which had previously sustained only a Lectureship, that the Theological School received a formal organization. The Hollis Professor of Divinity, the Hancock Professor of Hebrew, and the Alford Professor whose delightful exercises in Moral Philosophy were soon closed by death, were associated with the Dexter Professor; and at first sight it might be thought that

a sufficient body of teachers was provided for a much larger number of pupils than claimed their attention. But only one of these gentlemen gave his whole time to the School. The instruction devolved chiefly on Dr. Ware and Mr. Norton, — both remarkable men, diligent scholars, and able teachers. The younger members of this audience may know the former only through the traditions that preserve peculiarities of character or manner which give point to some pleasant anecdote; but they who came under his influence can never forget the calm dignity, the practical wisdom, the judicial fairness, or the friendly interest which secured for him more than respect; — it was veneration which we felt. That clear, strong mind abhorred double-dealing with truth or with man. As candid as he was firm, as little blinded by self-esteem as by sophistry, he taught us to hold in just regard alike the privileges and the limitations of human thought. Theological study has extended its domain since his day; his learning was not as various nor as profound as that of some other men in his own time; but for that integrity of mind which is better than the most affluent knowledge, and for an honesty of life which foiled the calumnies of those who thought it no offence against morality to charge good men with a perversion of trusts, he is worthy of a place among them whose remembrance shall never die.

The main burden in raising and supporting the reputation of the School fell on Professor Norton. Of him, too, it may not be easy for those who cannot recall evenings spent in that well-furnished library which he converted into the most attractive of recitation-rooms, to believe that he inspired an enthusiasm which still glows in hearts no longer young. Mr. Norton was one who could not be understood at a distance. With tastes, as well as habits of life, which separated him from general society, he was known, if known at all, outside the lines of intimacy, rather as a studious recluse than as a man of warm affections. Yet they who came nearest to him might tell us how admiration for the scholar melted into grateful esteem for the friend. His writings but partially reveal his character. A fastidious conscientiousness, as I think it may

be styled, led him to retrench and erase, till the work which should have been his monument, "ære perennius," lies upon our shelves an unfinished Translation and a fragmentary collection of Notes. His reputation, indeed, rests safely on his "Genuineness of the Gospels," and on his "Statement of Reasons," scarcely less admirable, nor less worthy of a permanent place in theological literature. A leader among those who were then taunted as infidels, his religious faith was "like mount Zion, which cannot be removed." Standing between Orthodoxy and Rationalism, he dealt heavy blows on either hand. Too individual to be sectarian, as the champion of an unpopular cause his single arm vindicated its right to respectful consideration. Mr. Norton erred through want of sympathy with the multitude. He had little respect for the associations which, if they sometimes conceal mental poverty, more often uphold a trembling heart. That any one should wish to retain a doubtful word in the Common Version of the Scriptures, because it had grown dear to the experience of generations, seemed to him an offence against truth. Severe as a critic, and pungent in rebuke of personal fault, — when his class trusted him, how he took them into his embrace, and bore them into the store-houses of his great learning! Let the alumni of this School never be negligent in restoring the lustre that may have faded from his name!

The progress of a few years sufficed to show the need of still ampler arrangements for theological education. In 1824 a change was proposed in the terms of connection between the Corporation and the Society formed in 1816, which, though productive of some beneficial results, would, if it had been carried into full effect, have "vested the management of the School in the hands of a body in which the College Government had very little share." The Corporation withheld their consent from the Act of the Legislature conferring such power. Attention, however, having been drawn to the wants of the School, its friends exerted themselves again on its behalf, and nearly twenty thousand dollars were raised, by subscriptions for the erection of Divinity Hall, which was dedicated on the 29th of August, 1826. It may

not be unpleasant in these days, when the liberality of our churches is invoked for the enterprises we are undertaking, to accept the encouragement left us in the example of our fathers. On that subscription-list four names are pledged for a thousand dollars each, ten for five hundred, forty-five for a hundred or more each; while smaller sums, many not exceeding five dollars, show that it was not the rich alone who in this way expressed their interest in the cause of religious truth. By an appropriation of two thousand dollars at this time, the first step was taken in collecting a library for the special use of students in theology; which, through an intermittent liberality in later years, has grown, as some of us who remember the meagre appearance of its shelves may be surprised to learn, till it now includes more than sixteen thousand volumes, well selected, and, in many instances, of great value.

As early as 1827, as a fruit of the intimacy that naturally followed upon residence in the same building, the members of the School began a record of its internal history, which has been continued to the present time. On one of the earliest pages is preserved a motion which, it appears, was, after some debate, carried almost unanimously, and which may indicate both the tendency of thought and the practical activity that then prevailed. It was voted, in view of "the extraordinary exertions which unbelievers in Christianity are now making in this country, that a committee of the School be appointed to procure the publication of a cheap edition of Watson's *Apology for the Bible*;" upon which, as the record tells us, "a subscription was immediately raised by the School, and a new edition" of the *Apology* "was struck off in a few weeks, and circulated as extensively as possible by means of the public auctions." I may not quote other pleasant passages which this volume of records contains; but it would be an omission that some of the brethren might not forgive, if we passed over in silence the establishment of the Philanthropic Society in the summer of 1831, or the good service which members of the School in successive years rendered by their visits to the State's prison and the East Cam-

bridge jail, as well as more recently by the part they have taken in the teaching or superintendence of Sunday-schools in or near Cambridge.

In the summer of 1828, Dr. Follen, who had for some time been teacher of the German language in the University, was appointed "Instructor in Ecclesiastical History and Ethics in the Theological School," and became, also, a member of the Faculty. Ethical study had been with him a favorite pursuit, and he could not fail to communicate to others his own lively interest. In consequence of a change in the plan on which the School was organized, Dr. Follen held this office but two years. In that time, however, the impression which his character and varied accomplishments made on his pupils was such as they still retain; for no one who spent an hour in his company could be insensible to the charm of his rare excellence. Ardent in his devotion to liberty, sincere in his desire for truth, frank in avowing his convictions, with large sympathies and tender affections, few men have lived more worthy of esteem than he, few have secured a warmer regard or a more cordial respect. Driven from his native land by the action of despotic governments that dreaded his influence, he brought to his adopted country the principles which gave consistency to his life. There and here a patriot, a scholar, and a Christian, his death, under circumstances which aggravated our grief, was for him a translation to the joy of the "good and faithful."

In 1829, fresh proof was given that our School had watchful and generous friends, — in the subscription, easily filled, of more than thirteen thousand dollars for the establishment of a Professorship of Pulpit Eloquence and the Pastoral Care. That the younger Dr. Ware would be the incumbent of this chair was, doubtless, a motive which had special weight with the contributors. He did not enter on its duties till after his return from Europe, in the autumn of 1830. For twelve years, with feeble health, he gave to this School a force of purpose, a consecration of heart, and an amount of labor that no testimony of ours can exaggerate. When I think of his life, it seems to me more a romance than a reality. It was

so full of goodness, such an example of faith, such a pattern of industry, so self-contained and well proportioned, yet so direct an impulse and help to others, such an instance of what a man may be and what he may do under hindrances suited to rob him of efficiency, that I am tempted to ask if it is the actual or the mythical which his name represents. That God had bestowed on him the gift of genius, no one who has read the poetic effusions which occasion struck from his glowing mind can doubt; that the end for which he lived was "the formation," in others, "of the Christian character" which he himself exemplified, every line of prose that he wrote puts beyond question. Though sometimes cold or languid in manner, what warmth of holy feeling kept that true heart of his unchilled by sickness or disappointment! If there was little method in his life, there was only the more variety in his work. Positive in his belief, and practical in his aims, deeply religious and broadly charitable, his instruction was too sincere to covet display, and his influence too pure to excite antagonism. A certain youthful simplicity clung to him to the last, and when he dropped the load of threescore years, the whispered word was not concerning the preacher or the professor,—we said, "Henry Ware has gone."

The year which brought Mr. Ware to the School took from it the strength which had been its main support. Professor Norton resigned his office in the spring of 1830, and a further change was made in the organization of this department of the University. The connection between the Government of the College and the Society for the Promotion of Theological Education was dissolved, the latter body transferring its funds, including its property in Divinity Hall, to the former under certain conditions, and obtaining at the next session of the General Court an Act of incorporation which, by erasing from its title the words that gave it a local purpose, authorized it to expend at its own discretion and in any quarter whatever funds might thereafter be intrusted to it. "The College," in the language of a Report to the Board of Overseers, drawn up by the late Judge Shaw, "on great

deliberation, established a Theological Faculty, upon a plan satisfactory to the Society, under a series of statutes, which were afterwards submitted to and approved by the Overseers." In the opinion of this eminent jurist, the previous history of our School must have belonged to a period of immature development. "Down to this time," as we learn, "students had been in the habit of leaving the School at various stages of the course, to enter the pulpit." The material change, however, appears to have consisted in the creation of a distinct Faculty and the disallowance of any external control. Under the new arrangement, the Rev. John G. Palfrey was called to the Professorship of Biblical Literature, which he filled with equal devotion and ability till the claims of a broader service withdrew him from the halls of learning. Thankful that to a future day must be left those words of eulogy which may not be spoken in the living presence, we are not precluded from an acknowledgment of the obligation under which, not his pupils only, but the churches also that bear this School upon their sympathies, were placed by the watchful care and thorough instruction which marked the nine years of his residence here. The published volumes with which he has enriched our sacred literature, reminding us of the aid which free investigation and faithful study lend to each other, can open but a glimpse into the diligence and conscientiousness of research of which the classes under his instruction reaped the benefit. Their tongues are laden with grateful praise.

The interest which the alumni felt in the place of their professional education was shown by the favor with which a proposal was received to form the Association I am now addressing. A Committee appointed at the Visitation in July, 1837, reported the next year resolutions, which were unanimously adopted, and the Officers of the Association were chosen, Rev. Dr. Walker being our first President. "Remarks were made by several gentlemen," says the record, "commendatory of the" step which had been taken, "as tending to strengthen the sacred bonds of spiritual brotherhood, to enliven mutual interest in the great cause of

Liberal Christianity, and especially to increase the number of preachers and to build up the Divinity School." Such, brethren, were the objects contemplated at the commencement of our Association. It becomes us not to lose sight of them. The Constitution under which we now act was adopted in 1839. The Address delivered that year, the first of those which have been read before this body, became the occasion of so memorable a correspondence that it should be noticed, even if it lead us aside a moment from our direct path. In that Address Mr. Norton spoke in strong rebuke of certain opinions then "prevalent, at war," as he thought, "with a belief in Christianity." The severity of his language called forth a Letter from "an alumnus of this School," who was understood to be the Rev. George Ripley, then a minister in Boston, in which Mr. Norton's positions were vigorously assailed. Mr. Norton replied. A Second, and a Third Letter from Mr. Ripley followed, — not brief notes, but elaborate discussions. We may regret the tone of asperity in which the writers sometimes indulged, but the ability displayed on both sides gives a permanent value to these pamphlets.

The subscription of 1829 had made provision for a new professorship only for a period of ten years. At the expiration of that time, the late Rev. Dr. Parkman, always a true friend of the School, by a donation of five thousand dollars, in addition to a sum of about equal amount for which the College was indebted to his father's generosity, enabled the Corporation to create a permanent chair of instruction in Pulpit Eloquence and the Pastoral Care; to which, as well as to the Professorship established in the same year by a consolidation of the Hancock and Dexter foundations, no one needs to be informed that many duties were assigned besides those indicated by its title.

It was through another example of liberality on the part of our churches that the inadequate income derived from the Hancock and Dexter foundations after their union was made available for the establishment of the future professorship. So critical a moment was this in the history of our School, that the circular announcing its want declared it impossible

to postpone the application for aid, as, "in that case, the School at the close of the year would necessarily be suspended, and the students dispersed." By the concurrent efforts of the Society for Promoting Theological Education, which still looked on the School with a parental eye, and of the Berry Street Ministerial Conference, acting through a Committee, ten thousand dollars were obtained, and were given, in trust, to the Corporation, "to be used solely in conjunction with other funds of the College appropriated to the Dexter Professorship, or Lectureship, in Biblical Literature; provided, however, that the said Professorship or Lectureship shall never be left vacant for an unreasonable time; and provided, also, that in case the funds transferred by the Society in 1830 should ever be appropriated for the support of a Theological School separate from the College,"—a contingency for which provision had been made at that time,— "the money now contributed shall go with said funds."

The vacancy created by Dr. Palfrey's resignation in 1839 was filled the next year by the election of the present senior Professor in the School. Again I must be silent, not daring to tell with what fidelity and success he has for nearly thirty years discharged oppressive, if not discordant, duties, — duties the requisition of which ascribed to him extensive scholarship and diligent habits of life, as well as a heart devoted to the interests of liberal theological culture; with what patient and hopeful persistency he has toiled, alike in the vigor of his manhood and under the infirmities of age; how close he has drawn to himself the young men who have studied with him the pages of the sacred volume; how large a debt of gratitude is due to him from every English reader who desires to know what the poets and prophets and moralists of Hebrew antiquity actually wrote; nor how grateful we should be to the Providence that has brought "the shadow on the dial backward." Long and cloudless be the twilight of a long and useful day!

Mr. Ware's connection with the school terminated with the academic year of 1842. Under recent developments of opinion in our body, the election of his successor became a mat-

ter of anxious interest. The choice of Dr. Francis probably conciliated as general favor as any that could have been made. In strong sympathy with what were considered progressive tendencies in thought and in society, he was a man of positive convictions and firm purposes. Intensely fond of books, he was attentive to every voice that suggested practical enterprise. Discursive rather than profound, in a certain sense he knew too much. In his dread of doing injustice to any opinion, he sometimes kept the scales too equally balanced, by throwing in a doubt on this side, or a favorable interpretation on that. Fearful of exerting an influence that might obstruct the free action of the pupil's mind, he spread before his class the treasures which his wide research had gathered, rather than gave them the benefit of his own judgment in selecting the more valuable. It was a mistake in his theory of teaching, to which he adhered to the last. But never did a teacher come before his class with a more single desire to help them in their preparation for life's work, and never was there a more conscientious endeavor on the part of professor or private Christian to do his whole duty. If he ever grew weary under the burden of manifold service, how bravely did he gird up his strength and how sweetly maintain his composure! Twenty-one years of faithful perseverance entitle him to enduring remembrance.

Common sense at last awoke to lend its aid to the claim of humanity. The experiment of putting on the shoulders of two men work in which six might have found full employment had been tried long enough. The Corporation of the College had never shown so hearty an interest in the School as its friends were disposed to demand of them. No one could deny that they held a difficult position, as the guardians of a University professedly and really unsectarian, and at the same time intrusted with the control, as a part of that University, of an institution which, while it opened its doors with an impartial freedom, was understood to be maintained in the interest of a particular Christian sect. An adjustment of official duties under such circumstances required deliberate wisdom. Still there was more or less of outspoken complaint,

— not quite silenced yet, — that the Theological Department did not receive the attention which it merited. A general demand arose that relief should be found for overtasked energies, and some provision be made to supply obvious wants. The Society for Promoting Theological Education again interposed its friendly aid. Relying on subscriptions in several of our churches, it proposed to the Corporation to pay to the treasurer of the College, for a period of six years, a sum sufficient to secure the services of two non-resident professors, who should give instruction in Ecclesiastical History and Dogmatic Theology. Under this engagement, Dr. Hedge was in 1857 appointed to the former chair, and Dr. Ellis to the latter. Although able to be present in Divinity Hall but a few hours in each week, the direction which they gave to the inquiries of the students, and their personal influence, as well as the lectures which they delivered, were of great value; and as the period for which the temporary arrangement was made drew near its close, the Corporation took advantage of facilities which were now for the first time at their command, to give permanent enlargement to the ability of the School to accomplish its purpose. A large bequest, made some years before under certain restrictions, became available; and the Bussey Income Fund was used to meet the annual deficiency in the income from the Hancock and Parkman funds, and to furnish the means of continuing the Professorship of Ecclesiastical History under its former (and present) incumbent. The instruction which had been given in the carefully conducted exercises of the Professor of Dogmatic Theology was recommitted to one of the resident Professors.

The death of Dr. Francis, in 1863, deprived the Meadville School of its esteemed Principal, and placed him in charge of the Parkman Professorship. The selection, so happily made, has not failed to fulfil its promise, and we trust that many future years will furnish continually augmenting proof of its wisdom.

We should omit an important passage in our history if we said nothing of a discussion which at one time promised,

or threatened, a change in the Constitution of our School. The discontent felt at its but half-supplied need has more than once suggested the inquiry, whether its separation from the College would not be a benefit to all parties. A committee of the Board of Overseers, to whom the subject was referred in 1845, reported that it was "not expedient to sunder the relation then subsisting." A longer experience, however, revived the question, and disclosed a difference of opinion. The Corporation petitioned the Supreme Court, as clothed with Chancery powers, to decree a separation; and, on the Court's declining to act in the case for want of proper authority, were empowered by the Legislature "to resign the trusts heretofore assumed or accepted by them for the support of a Theological School;" under a belief that the Society for Promoting Theological Education was ready to accept the trusts. The Society had been ready; but, in obedience to that "law of liberty" which makes it the right of every one to change his mind for what he deems good and sufficient reasons, when asked to signify its assent by a formal vote, the Society not only refused, but took active measures to defeat the wish of the Corporation. After tedious delay and considerable expense, the Government of the College withdrew their request, and the whole proceeding served only to show that men agree fully, neither with one another, nor with themselves. Still more recent propositions for introducing new features into our system of professional education have not reached such maturity as would bring them within the purpose of our present remarks.

Our review of the fifty years embraced in the life of our School does not, indeed, show that "the little one has become a thousand, or the small one strong;" but it exhibits a progress which, on the whole, affords encouragement. The contrast between 1816 and 1866 may justify congratulation. Then, neither special professor nor regular student, neither building nor school; only the beginning of a movement which has grown to what we now see, and to the possibility of much

more into which the present may unfold itself. We have to-day a School, with which are connected honored names and cherished recollections ; three professors, or rather two and a fraction, — but the fraction worth so much that we are willing to call it a unit ; a building, large enough for more use than we make of it ; a library, of which we need not be ashamed ; a body of students, of whom their teachers speak as honest, earnest, and diligent ; and sufficient means to meet the present demand for pecuniary aid. Besides beneficiary funds at the disposal of the College Government, yielding about \$900 annually, the Hopkins Trustees have this year made the unusually large appropriation of \$2,400, and the Society which is constituted the trustee of Mr. Williams's legacy have distributed \$1,350.

Are we, therefore, satisfied with the present state of the institution, the record of whose half-century contains so much for which we may be grateful? Do we desire no increase, no improvement, content with things as they are? Certainly not. We want more money, more books, more professors, more students ; we want more distinctness of aim, more faith, more preparation for the ministry. Do we, then, wish for a reconstruction of our School, on other principles or with other purposes than those entertained by its founders ; or, are we only impatient to see those purposes more largely realized, those principles more resolutely illustrated? An intelligent reply to this question must be drawn from an acquaintance with the convictions under which the founders acted.

It might be impertinent to remark that they believed in the importance of systematic and thorough training for the Christian ministry, if a disposition had not betrayed itself in some quarters to undervalue discipline of this kind. Piety is better than learning, practical talent more important than theological education, the impulse of the heart more trustworthy than the skill of the head, — such truisms appear to be regarded as a conclusive answer to the argument in favor of Divinity Schools. Yet they do not in the slightest degree affect the weight of that argument, unless it can be shown that

study and friendship deprave the religious sentiment and unfit a man for usefulness. It is foolish, on the other extreme, to frown on every attempt to supply preachers except from institutions of learning. The combination of good common sense with holy zeal often produces a result which scholastic discipline cannot reach. Besides, our institutions of learning can afford but partial relief for a universal want. If we will have none but well-educated ministers, we shall leave the bulk of the people without any religious interpretation of life. But not the less need is there of ministers who shall have put themselves under careful and thorough instruction. The standard of preaching throughout the country, and the character of the other professional work which should be done, are gradually raised, or are saved from deterioration, by the example which they, as a class, shall set. Of course, there will be exceptions; but, in general, preparatory discipline augments spiritual power. Wesley owed to Oxford a part of his success as a preacher to the English people; Paul was a better apostle for having sat at the feet of Gamaliel.

The School that was planted here by the men whose worthy deed comes into remembrance to-day had a definite object. It was meant to prepare young men for the Christian ministry,—for future service among their fellow-men, and for service distinctively Christian. “We are assembled,” said Dr. Channing in the opening sentence of his Discourse at the Dedication of Divinity Hall, “to set apart and consecrate this building to the education of teachers of the Christian religion.” Such had been the aim through the ten previous years; such has continued to be the aim of those who have had charge of this seminary,—to fit men to teach the Christian religion. It has not been the purpose of its friends to send into society philosophers or reformers, except so far as either (or both) philosophy and reform might help in carrying forward the great work, of which, in the language of the earliest Christian poem, Christ is “the alpha and the omega.” Free inquiry has been encouraged from the first, but as a means in the prosecution of an end; truth has been sought, but, when reached through the boldest or the most anxious inquiry,

still itself a means: the end is life, — life in the teacher, and life in the taught, — that life of which the Author of our religion spoke when he said, "This is life eternal, to know thee, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom thou hast sent." "Hid," as an apostle declared, "with Christ in God," this life could be found most easily, most surely, if not only, by faith in Christ as the reconciling and uniting medium between God and the human soul. The mediation of Christ becoming, therefore, a vital fact in the experience of the believer, faith in Christ not only was the motive power which led to the establishment of this School, but was regarded by its founders as the perennial source of the life that must be realized within its halls, and that should go forth from them to enter into, purify, and invigorate the life of the community. I do not understand that a different view has yet been adopted by those who watch over its interests.

In the pursuit of preparation for the Christian ministry, a study of the Bible rose into immediate and chief importance. Sacred criticism, in the largest sense of that term, was made to occupy a prominent place in the instruction given here. The attention recently drawn to this branch of study was one of the proximate causes of the establishment of our School. The change in doctrinal belief, which had been silently going on, introduced contemporaneously a more practical style of preaching and a more intelligent use of the Scriptures. Buckminster led the way on both these lines of progress, and in his death sacred learning suffered as great a loss as the pulpit. For many years scriptural interpretation was pursued with an avidity that can hardly be understood amidst the interest excited by the broader questions of the present day. Michaelis and Rosenmuller were names as familiar then as Mill or Spencer now, and were pronounced with as great respect. He who could buy nothing else bought a Griesbach, and he who owned a Wetstein was rich indeed. Doubtless there was danger — perhaps we fell into it — that the philological would overshadow the spiritual; but such a mistake only made more clear the reverence for the Bible into which our institution had been baptized.

Not in the interest, however, of any sectarian use of the sacred volume ; for a fundamental principle of our School has always been absolute freedom from sectarian dictation. If its teachers and patrons have been Unitarians, they have neither attempted nor wished to exert any influence in favor of their own opinions except such as came from fair argument, honest citation of Scripture, and a good life. They have neither restricted freedom nor controlled faith. What has been the consequence? That most of the graduates have entered the Unitarian ministry? Undeniably ; but this is no more than was expected, and no more than we hold to have been inevitable under a frank and impartial treatment of the questions at issue among Christian believers. That all have left the School for the Unitarian pulpit? No ; some have become ministers among the Trinitarian Congregationalists, some among the Episcopalians, and others among the Universalists. And this has caused neither surprise nor disappointment ; for that men with free minds and honest hearts, but with those differences of constitutional bias which mark individuals, should, under a system that attaches no stigma to dissent, arrive, all of them, at the same conclusion, is as improbable as that all trees on the same soil and under the same exposure should be equally straight or should attain an equal height.

Our anxiety to avoid sectarianism may be thought to have led us too far in another direction. Putting no reins on freedom, we have seen it pass the bounds of humble reverence and docile faith. Well ! I do not know that this should be an occasion of surprise or alarm. We have undertaken to solve a problem which has many times been given up in despair, and has never been handled with entire success, — how to unite faith and freedom in those just proportions which shall preserve each from suffering through its connection with the other. That we cannot give the solution need not cover us with shame. We may be grateful that our formula is nearer the truth than any other. This School has never shown itself so unworthy of its origin as to disallow liberty, nor so regardless of its inheritance as to dishonor a

positive Christian faith. Either would be a suicidal policy. Happily we are not called to choose between a slow poison and the assassin's blow.

If the intentions of those who became sponsors to Liberal Christianity for the future character of our School were such as I have described, few of us, probably, would advocate any material change in its organization. Yet it may be said that these intentions, however sincere or excellent, have not secured for it uninterrupted prosperity, nor do they enable us to look upon its present state with entire satisfaction. Do honest men feel entire satisfaction with anything human? That there are no defects, or that there have been no mistakes, it would be transparent folly to affirm. That our beloved institution is passing through a critical period in its history, it would be useless to deny. Yet two facts seem to me suited to allay apprehension. We have the principles and purposes which belonged to its early days not only preserved on record, but incorporated with its very life; while the other fact is not less suggestive of encouragement,—that the troubles which threaten or surround us are incidental to the period in the world's history through which all personal or social life is passing. An institution that did not feel the movement going on around it would be more venerable than useful. On the banks of the Rhine stands a castle, which, while others at no great distance have fallen into ruins and modern civilization has reared its dwellings in the neighborhood, has been fondly kept from decay, with its furniture renewed after the old pattern; and there it stands, looking down on the busy river along which the steamboat rushes back and forth, and the wire of the telegraph transmits intelligence with electric rapidity, as it looked down upon the long silence or the sudden fierce conflict of the mediæval times,—a memorial of the past, which holds a half-dozen sleepy guardsmen within its walls, and receives an annual visit from its royal owner. We want no such literary or ecclesiastical structure, perched where the spirit of the age cannot have access to its apartments.

The anxiety we may feel arises in part from external manifestations, and partly from internal tendencies. The restless temper of the times discards our old methods, and asks for a quicker or more practical education of those who are eager to show the way of life to the multitude whose "senses have never been exercised to discern both good and evil." Let it obtain its demand. The entrance to-morrow of a thousand earnest men into the ministry, not one of whom had ever shaken the dust of Cambridge or Meadville or any other Theological School from his feet, would be a blessing to the country. But would not the ten, or the two, or the fifty, whom Meadville or Cambridge might educate, be just as much needed; not for city churches alone, for human nature and spiritual want are very much the same everywhere, but for the general edification? As for the practical training which it is thought may be found by living in daily intercourse with the people, let me say in good faith what I think you, brethren, will confirm, that the first three months of ministerial life will teach more than could be learned in a year by that sort of discipline which at best can make one familiar only with the surface of parochial work, while the time which it shall occupy must be taken from hours of study for which, desired or needed, though it be, little opportunity may be found afterwards.

The temper of the times has introduced a change which some of us may regret, not only in our School, but in every similar institution. The same space on the prospectus may be allowed to exegetical study as formerly, but the interest is not the same. Doctrinal inquiry, too, which once held the first rank in the estimation alike of Orthodox and of Liberal, has been obliged to yield precedence to questions which philanthropy is pressing upon the Christian heart. The subjects assigned for dissertations at other anniversaries than our own, show what deference is paid to the public taste. Is the office of the Professor of Sacred Literature, or his who attempts to systematize the scriptural truths, therefore a sinecure? By no means. When gravitation ceases to hold the world together, the Bible may cease to be the all-

pervasive influence of a Divinity School; or, if the latter change should precede the other, the institution will fall to pieces as surely as would the material world were the mighty power of gravitation withdrawn. You may have something else without the Bible, and it may be something in which men shall take a senseless or a just pride, but it will not be a Divinity School, and, least of all, a Christian Divinity School.

The tendencies which have developed themselves within our School, whether we view them with pleasure or with grief, are really currents from abroad which have made their way within its walls, and in regard to which the only question that its friends could decide was, whether they should come in under ground or in open daylight. I doubt if they will work any more mischief from having come in the latter way. Of two of these tendencies I beg leave to say a word in sincerity and in kindness; and for the sake of distinctness I will call them the philosophical and the sceptical. Are they not one and the same, it may be asked. Under certain aspects they appear to be the same, but they may be distinguished from each other.

Philosophy is the comprehensive term that includes the various explanations which man may give of the universe, or of its several parts. In former times it was thought that such explanations belonged to men of acute minds or scientific culture, and had not a very intimate connection with the religious experience. Now, it is directly maintained in some instances, and virtually in many others, that philosophy must give us the basis of a spiritual life. When logically consistent, as it is every day becoming more and more, this statement makes human nature the starting-point of religious inquiry and religious faith. To find truth or God, we must begin in ourselves. Man is the unit in computing spiritual forces, the first step in every constructive process of thought. I do not mean to address you with argument in support or in refutation of this theory, — as for my present purpose I may style it. That the root of our troubles may be found here, is the single point I wish to urge on your consideration. The differences among us go down deeper than interpretation or

criticism, deeper than the questions which the Unitarian controversy brought forward sixty years ago. They go down to the depths. Now, some of us think we cannot go down so far; and others think that human nature is misunderstood by the philosophy of the day, which, if it begin with an error in its appreciation of man, is not likely to be sound in the conclusions it shall present respecting Christ and God. Philosophy, too, it is said by some (denied by others), has always wrought mischief in the Christian Church. Witness Gnosticism in the early age, and Calvinism at the time of the Reformation,—one as much a philosophical system as the other; Calvinism beginning with a human will in God, as modern thought begins with a divine being in man, and so working down to its grievous falsehoods, as this works up to its transcendental fancies. This modern style of thought has come into our Theological School through open doors. Have closed doors, with ingenious fastenings, kept it out of Andover or New Haven? Shall we turn it out, and shut the door against it? If we can, we may. If we cannot, it must stay. Shall we stay too? That, brethren, is a question which every one must answer for himself. But really, if there be nothing worse than a wrong philosophy, active and confident as that is, it seems to me that the best which they who do not like it can do is to remain where they can speak to it in the name of the Lord,—not as Peter did when he said to Simon, “Repent of this thy wickedness,” for we have no right to assume that there is any wickedness about it, but as Paul wrote in tender love to those who were in danger from false teaching, “Beware lest any one spoil you through philosophy, after the tradition of men, and not after Christ.”

But there *is* something worse; there is the sceptical tendency. Let us look at that. What is its character? We must not be misled by a word. Scepticism may be audacious and profane, or it may be simply inquisitive. It may be a settled habit of the mind, or it may be only a tentative process; and there is all the difference between the two that there is between an assertion and a question. Moreover, active scepticism and steadfast faith are sometimes found in

union, — the vessel tossed upon the perilous waves, yet holding by its anchor. A disposition, which is often met abroad, we have been told, has shown itself in this School, to doubt and then to reject many truths which the Christian Church in all ages has accounted sacred, and which Unitarians have held as dear as any other Christian body. This disrespect has grown more positive and aggressive, till, under the names of theism and radicalism, it attempts to organize a faith of its own and to subvert the whole fabric of Christian theology. It denies the lordship of Christ and the authority of the Bible, making the soul, or "the spirit" in the soul, the arbiter on all questions of belief or duty. Can a faith which draws its support, and indeed its justification, from the New Testament, maintain alliance or friendship with such denial? Certainly not, unless men reverse the law of moral affinities. But the practical question for those who hold this faith involves other conditions. If Radicalism means only uprooting, and they who accept the name expend their strength in denial, there is no ground of sympathy left between them and believers; but if they, too, have real faith, though it do not answer to our idea of Christian faith, and join with it religious sensibility and a conscientious attitude of the soul towards a spiritual life, there is room for mutual respect and confidence. What! without disloyalty to Christian convictions? Yes, provided we retain, and on the other hand concede, the right to speak of what is deemed to be error in terms of earnest dissent, or even severe condemnation. Because conservatism and progress look in opposite directions, it does not follow that the Conservative and Progressive parties cannot hold intercourse. The man who is crowding steam and the man who is turning the brakes may not only travel on the same train, but may exchange friendly words, while each opposes the effort of the other with all his might. Apply such an illustration, or the principle it is meant to uphold, to our School, or to any similar institution, it may be said, and the result will be friction, strife, failure, ruin. Undoubtedly, — if there be not a dominant will, and a settled policy of action. For the sake alike of peace and of pros-

perity, for the sake of the School, and for the Gospel's sake, the control must remain in the hands of those who represent the original design, which was, as we have seen, to make Christian ministers; and this control must be exercised in the interest of a reverential and grateful faith towards him who is the Head, even Christ. To admit to an enjoyment of privileges is one thing; to invite into a share in the government is another thing. The former may be nothing more than justice; the latter nothing less than folly.

For the same reason I cannot but think that an attempt to introduce into the School teachers of different religious persuasions, all coveting the Christian name, would result in confusion rather than advantage. Let this be a Liberal, unsectarian, Unitarian School for another half-century, as it has been through the perplexities and trials (which have not been few) of its first fifty years, and long before the end of that period, whatever new difficulties may arise, the old ones will have disappeared. An institution this must be, if it would fulfil the intentions of its past benefactors or the hopes of its present friends, which shall prepare Christian men for Christian labor; not satisfied with making scholars or theologians, still less content to dismiss from its care only accomplished writers or acute reasoners, but eager to send into the world those who, through a consecration of their own upon which God has put his seal, shall be able to carry on the work which Jesus committed to his disciples when he said, "Go ye and preach the gospel to every creature," — the gospel of redemption for sinners, of endless life for human souls, of joy and hope and glory for all who shall receive the commandment in faith. This is the purpose for which our School will be needed long after questions which now agitate the community shall have been dropped, perhaps to be again revived (how many of them are now but old questions modernized!), and to be again sent back to the land of shadows, — long after the philosophy and the science which now use such arrogant speech shall have entered into the service of the religion of Christ; for ignorance and sin will not then have left the earth, and they will need, to re-

buke the one and to enlighten the other, the influences of truth and love which may go forth from an institution like this, in the charge of those who shall successively leave its retirement to bear among their fellow-men the blessings of the everlasting covenant of peace which God has revealed to us through the ministry of his dear Son.

And this, brethren, is a foundation broad enough to sustain the belief that our School will live, and grow, and be more and more an instrument in the Divine hand for executing God's gracious purpose towards mankind. There is a place for it in the world, and a place which it must fill. Changes might doubtless be introduced that would adapt it more to the wants and the opportunities of the present hour; other changes hereafter, to adjust its action to future conditions in its relative life. I have said that an institution enwrapped in its traditions, insensible to the social movement in the midst of which it stands, retains its tranquillity at the expense of its usefulness. Let me now add, that no institution suited to the times *can* remain as it was fifty years ago. Has not the University to which our School belongs acknowledged this fact with an honorable frankness? Is it not acknowledged on all hands? When a Bishop of London says that "the Church must keep abreast of the age," it is time for every one to see that he is not found among the loiterers. The old relations between religion and science, for example, are no longer what they were when one was in its cradle and the other on its sick-bed. Now, each in its vigor, they must grapple for a while; and then, having found each other's strength, they will be close friends. We need not fear that the instructors in our School will not welcome improvement. They do not deprecate criticism upon the methods they pursue. If they commit errors, they invite remark that shall point them out, taking as their own the words of the learned and candid Le Clerc, "*Nulla ratio est, cur vera monenti nos adsentiri non profiteamur; quamquam benigna monitio multo gratior est.*"

Our duty in the case, brethren, it is not difficult to define. What shall be done for the Cambridge School, is a question

that has been asked more than once of late. What shall *we* do for it? Love it, and stand by it. If its faults were ten times as many and its failures ten times as great as its most uneasy friend or its most captious enemy can prove them to have been, it might still ask — ask? nay, demand of us — the support which sons should give to the mother that has nourished them from her own bosom. If the question recur in its practical aspect, what shall be done, the answer is easily furnished. Change the form of the inquiry, and the answer springs to our lips. What does the School want at this moment? More men. More men, that there may be more instruction and more influence. Who does not see that there should be two new Professorships? Each of the resident Professors is now burdened with double duty. Divide the work by increasing the number of the workmen. Is it idle to talk of such an enlargement? Then it is vain to think of putting the School on a satisfactory basis. So far from being impracticable, it is perfectly feasible. Fifty thousand dollars will accomplish all we desire; and that is a small sum in view of the good that would be done, or in comparison with the gifts which men are every day bestowing for the advancement of letters, science, and religion. Why, we have heard so often within the last three years of munificent endowments — here a hundred thousand and there half a million dollars, and all over the country noble examples of liberality — that they have ceased to excite surprise. Is there no rich man who will give the forty thousand dollars that would found a Professorship in our School? There must be more than one such man, if we could only bring the facts just as they are before them. Then *we* will raise, — we poor ministers, with the grace of God to help us in our address to our people, will raise ten thousand more. And with this money in our hands, when we go to the Corporation, and say to them, “You will have next year from that part of the Bussey bequest which cannot be diverted from theological education a surplus income of from a thousand to fifteen hundred dollars, with the probability of an equal amount every year till, by the termination of the annuities with which that bequest

is now encumbered, you will be able to change a provisional into a permanent arrangement; and we ask you, taking the sum we now bring, to make the provisional arrangement at once," does any one believe they would hesitate a half-hour? Let them feel much or little interest in this special department, as guardians of the University they could not hesitate. And then our School would have its proper organization, under a sufficient body of teachers; which it has never had from its beginning to this day.

And then, with more instruction than can now be given, the personal influence which is so important an element in the education of young men, for impulse and for restraint, wholesome in both directions when judiciously exerted, and which can be but partially felt by the students where the teacher's other duties absorb his time, such an influence would penetrate and pervade the School, moulding the character, if not shaping the faith of its members. That faith would be strengthened by sympathy with those in whom it was seen to be both intelligent conviction and the heart's dearest treasure, is inevitable. That character would gain purity and energy within the atmosphere which moral and spiritual excellence creates around itself, must be accounted a still higher benefit; for, after all, it is character that we wish to produce, simplicity and force of character,—personal holiness, the best preparation for professional work. In a School like this, besides the enthusiasm of study, there should be the enthusiasm of a divine life; and what will so effectually help these young men to realize in their own souls this life as the presence among them day after day the year through, the three years through, of one (of more, if they can be found; but in the variety of gifts which God has distributed among men, he who has the most knowledge, or the most ability for teaching, may not have the most of heavenly fire or of magnetic attraction), the presence of one who shall put his own lofty purpose and fervent piety and tender charity and Christian force and self-denying zeal,—in a word, his own spiritual enthusiasm, into the breasts of all who come near him, and who must learn to honor, love, and imitate him?

Those of you, brethren, who listened yesterday to the Address on Ministerial Education hear its faint echo now; may it recall the original appeal! Give to this School the right man. Give to it all it wants,—men, sympathy, support. Let your recollections cling around it; let your hopes enfold it; let your prayers call down the Divine favor upon it. A half-century has passed, and another half-century has begun; let those, who on the next semi-centennial celebration shall stand where we now stand, be able to say of us, as we say of the early friends of this Seminary,—they did their part well, and we rejoice that they yielded to no discouragement and disregarded no obligation.

174

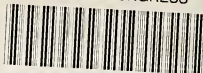


Deacidified using the Bookkeeper process.
Neutralizing agent: Magnesium Oxide
Treatment Date: Oct. 2005

PreservationTechnologies
A WORLD LEADER IN PAPER PRESERVATION

111 Thomson Park Drive
Cranberry Township, PA 16066
(724) 779-2111

LIBRARY OF CONGRESS



0 017 079 391 2

